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ABSTRACT

The purpose of a peer tutoring program is to assist those students who require ongoing and formal instruction in a subject area. If effectively run, it can have an impact on retention. There are five areas that need to be addressed when initiating a peer tutor program: (1) organization and funding; (2) supervision; (3) tutor training; (4) tutor program evaluation; and (5) public relations. The Community College of the Finger Lakes' (CCFL's) peer tutor program serves to illustrate effective techniques in these five areas. Since its initiation in 1981, CCFL's program has grown from employing 6 tutors and providing 68 hours of tutoring in 1981-82 to 34 tutors and 755 hours of tutoring in 1984-85. The college's experience with the program has underscored the importance of putting the rules and policies of the program in writing; training tutors in areas such as program rules, problem solving, questioning skills, and studying for particular subject areas; providing supervision, even if it is informal; collecting tutor and client evaluations; and mounting a good advertising campaign to attract tutors and clients. Appendices include a summary of the accomplishments of CCFL's tutor program, a Student/Client Diagnosis Checklist, tutor training materials, a bibliography of resources, questionnaires for both student and tutor, and public relations advertisements. (EJV)

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A SUCCESSFUL PEER TUTOR PROGRAM TO IMPROVE RETENTION

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"A SUCCESSFUL PEER TUTOR PROGRAM TO IMPROVE RETENTION"

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ABSTRACT: The necessary components of a successful peer tutor program at the college level include organization and funding, supervision, tutor training, evaluation, and public relations. This paper discusses these, relates them to a case study at a community college and provides a bibliography of resources for tutor programs.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of a peer tutor program is to assist those students who require ongoing and formal instruction in a subject area taught at the college or university. It can have an impact upon retention if it is run effectively. There are five areas that need to be addressed when initiating a peer tutor program. It is necessary that guidelines, handbooks, and training materials that are produced in the process of developing a program be written to meet the individual needs of the college.

ORGANIZATION AND FUNDING

1. Forms need to be developed to initiate the tutoring. It is suggested that the instructor of the course recommend a tutor and that the instructor also give permission for a student (client) to be tutored. Both the tutor and the client need to fill out a schedule of classes and other pertinent information to insure payment of the tutor.

2. The rules and regulations of the program need to be clearly stated in written form. Topics to be covered should include: benefits of the program, responsibilities, procedures for filling out forms, what to do during the first tutor session, other student services available at the college, and how the program is evaluated. A cover letter to tutors with dates of tutor training should be composed.

It is helpful to provide the participants with a short printed handbook that explains the program. A scheduled orientation session is also beneficial.

3. Funding can come from a variety of sources. Student government, the college foundation, the regular budget, title funds, student fees, and EOP funds are avenues to tap into.

SUPERVISION

Supervision can occur on a formal and an informal basis. Clients can fill out a card where they indicate the activities covered during a tutor session. Tutors can fill out a form where they write down the progress of the student and put down lesson plans.

It is important to assign a Tutor Coordinator from the faculty or staff to oversee the program. He or she can sit in on tutor sessions or even video-tape some of them for use in tutor training. Sometimes it is helpful for the coordinator to simply be within listening distance of a tutoring session and evaluate the instruction that way.

TUTOR TRAINING

It is imperative to conduct tutor training. Topics that may be covered include:

1) an orientation/informational session
2) general tutoring techniques
3) student services that students may have questions about
4) questioning skills and probing skills
5) study skills
6) special needs of international students, handicapped students, and learning disabled students
7) establishing rapport with the tutee and with the faculty member
8) building positive self-concepts in students

TUTOR PROGRAM EVALUATION

It should be the responsibility of the Tutor Coordinator to conduct evaluations with tutors, clients, and faculty involved with the program. It is helpful if the data collected is both quantitative and qualitative. There are many examples available, but it is most beneficial if the evaluation questions are tailored to the individual program.

Data that may be helpful to collect for administrative purposes are number of tutors, number of clients, number of hours tutored for each client, beginning and ending grades of the client, amount of money spent, and comments from evaluation questionnaires. Average number of hours spent per student, average grade, and percentage of students passing the course may be helpful. Be cautious about comparing grade point averages. However, retention rates can often show positive results when compared to general college statistics.

Some of the pertinent faculty comments solicited from questionnaires may include statements like "She did not make it through the course, but the tutoring made her feel more comfortable to try again" or "He had a very low level of motivation and I sincerely believe that tutoring gave him enough momentum to pass the course."

PUBLIC RELATIONS

It is certainly important to present a good image for your program to students, faculty, and administration.

1. A good solid advertising campaign to recruit tutors and clients is essential. Posters, flyers, newspaper blurbs and presentations to student clubs are some avenues. Perhaps a student from a marketing class can design the ads if college facilities are lacking.

2. The positive support of faculty can be garnered in their department meetings, through memos, and through personal informal conversations with faculty leaders.

3. The administration is often impressed with reports compiled from the evaluation process.

CASE STUDY: COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF THE FINGER LAKES

The Community College of the Finger Lakes is a rural college in upstate New York which serves approximately 1,500 part-time and 1,500 full-time students. Half of the enrollment is adult students over the age of 25. The college offers two-year degrees in business, conservation, science, humanities, criminal justice, mathematics and computer programming to mention a few. The college supports a Learning Center to assist students with their courses. Part of this operation is the PEER TUTOR PROGRAM. The program was started in 1981 with foundation funds and the college contributed to the fund with institutional monies in 1984 because of its expansion and success. In 1986 the program will again be expanded using funds from a Vocational Education Act grant.

The program has grown from employing 6 tutors in 1981-82 to 34 tutors in 1984-85; 68 hours of tutoring were clocked in 1981-82 and 755 hours in 1984-85; 8 clients received assistance in 1981-82 and 117 students had tutors in 1984-85. Because of the increase in student needs (or because the Center was getting the "word out") a Tutor Coordinator was appointed from the Learning Center staff in 1983. This has greatly enhanced the effectiveness of the program since the Coordinator has the responsibility of tutor training and evaluation of instruction. Each year the Coordinator files a report with the college administration as to the number of clients served, hours tutored, budget, and a comparison of grades

received in tutored courses (see Appendix I). This information has been helpful in getting college-wide support for the program both from faculty and from the administration.

Some of the caveats we have found in operating our program include:

1. It is important to put the rules and policies of the tutor program in writing. Because of the number of staff, faculty, work-study and clerical help that are involved in answering questions, leaving messages and solving daily problems, it is important to have some information in print for them to refer to. When planning budgets these policies assist in the formulation of goals and objectives. Clear regulations facilitate the smooth running of the program.

2. Tutor training and orientation is a must. Tutors chosen for the program are usually humanistic in their outlook and they realize that tutoring is hard work and also intuitive in approach. They need to be reinforced during training that they are professionals and that there is a positive way to approach every problem.

Offering a variety of faculty and support staff members as presenters at training workshops is also beneficial. The following represent a sample of a semester's sessions of tutor training:

A. The first session is the primary orientation to the rules and regulations of the program. We have developed a tutor handbook to facilitate this process where we talk about tutor benefits, daily forms to fill out, how to meet the client on the first session, and some suggestions on ways to solve problems that may arise (A copy is available from

the author upon request.). The tutor coordinator goes over the payroll forms and reiterates the rules and regulations printed in the handbook.

Although it is best for each individual campus to produce their own videotape, there are some excellent videotapes of positive and negative tutoring sessions that give the tutor some indication of what to expect. It is at this first session that a videotape of mock sessions is shown and the good and bad points are discussed. This seems to make tutors much more comfortable about the tutoring situation to see actual students in realistic situations. (See bibliography for list of videocassette materials.)

B. During the second session some brainstorming and problem-solving occurs as the students have had a chance to begin tutoring. It is during this session that we have the tutors pair up and present role-playing situations. We pass out cards with the situation typed on them and then we give them a break to discuss how they will act it out with their partner. Then, as each duo goes through their role-play, the rest of the group discusses the good and bad points and suggests alternatives to deal with the situation. Examples of some of the situations we use follow:

Your client refuses to read or participate. They have not brought their books or notes. Role play what you would do.

The client dislikes the instructor. The tutor is trying to help the situation to insure good faculty-student relations.

The tutor is not being attentive to the client. The client is becoming angry and hurt.

The tutor goes in to talk to the instructor about how the client is doing. The tutor also wants to know the criteria for grading that the instructor uses.

The client gets a "Dear John" letter. They want to quit. They claim that they can't think. They can't concentrate on the textbook. How does the tutor handle the situation.

The client is taking algebra and has a lot of math anxiety. She/he can't figure out problems because of mental blocks. How does the tutor handle the situation?

Role-play your first meeting with your client.

The client has a crush on you. It is interfering with his/her learning. How do you handle this?

You are trying to help your client with a difficult word. They are not paying attention. What do you do?

The client wants to drop out of school and feels dumb. The tutor must be encouraging.

During this session we usually ask a college counselor to be present and give some tips on how to handle situations. He or she also discusses the issue of being honest with the students, and how to handle delicate student-tutor-faculty situations where there may be a personality conflict with the faculty member and the client. Input from a counselor has been very beneficial to the program.

C. In the <u>third session</u> we again problem-solve and answer any questions. We then go through a lesson on questioning skills using a "Probing" videocassette produced by Beryl Brown of the University of California-San Diego. This session encourages tutors to have clients talk more during tutoring and makes the tutor aware of the vagaries of "yes-no" questioning.

We also talk about some of the study skills problems they may have noticed in their clients and some tips on how to assist students to become better note-takers and test-takers. We often have a study skills specialist come into this session.

D. The last session of the semester is a wrap-up. Sometimes, if the need has arisen, we may ask one of the content area teachers to come to the session and explain how to study for their content area. We try to be flexible on this last session because we want to be sure to meet the needs of the tutors. We often ask the tutors to fill out an evaluation at that time or to try and complete a student/client diagnosis checklist. (see Appendix II)

3. Tutor supervision, even if informal, is necessary for an effective tutor program. In our program it is too time-consuming for the coordinator to videotape sessions or to sit in on tutor instruction. Therefore, we schedule the sessions in the vicinity of the Learning Center and do informal observation of the sessions. This seems to work well and the tutors are comfortable with this type of evaluation. By listening informally, the tutor coordinator feels that he or she can interrupt and add something to what is being said, or can offer a slight suggestion to the tutor. This type of observation technique is seen as supportive by the tutors.

4. It is important to collect tutor and client evaluations for the defense of the program budget and to improve the program. Many inovations and changes in our operation have come about from these evaluations. Evaluations from the faculty involved in the program have also helped. Examples of evaluation forms are attached.

5. A good advertising campaign is a must to get qualified tutors and willing clients. We use posters, flyers, student newspaper articles and letters to faculty to solicit support. Examples of these instruments are attached.

SUMMARY

Peer tutor programs can have an impact on retention in colleges when they are well organized and run effectively. There are five areas that are important in designing an efficient program: organization and funding, supervision, tutor training, evaluation, and public relations. Decisions made in these areas should be tailored to the specific college student population. Examples from the Community College of the Finger Lakes serve to illustrate effective techniques in all of these areas.

II. THE TUTOR PROGRAM

A. CCFL MAIN CAMPUS

34 tutors formally tutored 117 students in 21 different subject areas. Comparative statistics follow. Tutor training continued in the fall semester, but did not occur in the spring semester. The staff must look at ways of increasing the effectiveness of the peer tutor training as well as cooperating more effectively with the EOP tutor program. A computer system was designed spring semester to computerize records and materials. It will be instituted next year.

The college has supported the request for additional institutional funds to support the tutor program next year. The planning office will continue to evaluate statistics. (Comparative Statistics Table on page 2a)

	Tutors	Tutees	Subjects	Hours	Budget
1982-83	14	50	13	365.75	$1,265.21
1983-84	23	81	21	573.50	2,171.40
1984-85	34	117	28	754.75	2,964.68

B. CCFL GENEVA CAMPUS

Students were tutored 49 hours in the peer tutor program. The program utilized 5 tutors and tutored approximately 12 students. Next year the program will be evaluated in a manner similar to the main campus program.

APPENDIX I

CCFL MAIN CAMPUS

PEER TUTOR PROGRAM

(Those tutored 3 or more hours)

YEAR	# TUTORS	# TUTEES	# SUBJECTS TUTORED	# HOURS TUTORED	BUDGET	AVERAGE # HRS. SPENT PER STUDENT TUTORING	% STUDENTS PASSING	AVERAGE GRADE
1981-82	6	8	6	68	$ 277.80	8.5	N/A	N/A
1982-83	14	50	13	297.75	1,265.21	6.0	67%	2.6
Fall 1983	18	46	--	365.75	1,141.43	8.0	65%	2.5
Spring '84	5	35	--	207.75	1,029.97	8.7	60%	1.8
Fall 1984	31	61	--	411.25	1,721.03	5.56	64%	
Spring '85	34	56	--	343.5	1,243.65	4.52	56%	
1984-85	34	117	28	754.75	2,964.68	5.04	59%	2.25

1982-83

67% passed (2.6 average grade)
20% -- A
30% -- B
40% -- C
10% -- D

33% -- W, F or I

1983-84

63% passed (2.1 average grade)
-% -- A
35% -- B
38% -- C
11% -- D

37% -- W, F or I

1984-85

59% passed (2.25 average grade)
1% -- A
12% -- B
33% -- C
22% -- D

27% -- W, F or I

No faculty comments were available at the printing of this report.

APPENDIX II

HANDOUT #6

STUDENT/CLIENT DIAGNOSIS CHECKLIST

IF YOU KNOW YOUR CLIENT WELL, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ABOUT THEM. THIS KNOWLEDGE WILL ASSIST YOU IN PLANNING EFFECTIVE TUTOR SESSIONS. PREPARE A WRITTEN CLIENT PROFILE THAT COVERS THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. What is the student's background in related coursework?
2. What is the student's level of functioning in other classes?
3. What is the best mode of learning for the student?
4. What is the student's time schedule like? How can they improve on it?
5. How did the Planning/Learning Styles Survey cause you to set up your tutor sessions?
6. What are the student's academic and career goals?
7. What is the living situation of the student and how does that affect them?
8. What is the current physical condition of the student?
9. What is the student's ability in the course and understanding of course content?
10. What are the student's textbook and lecture notes like?

**11. In your opinion, what is the student's most pressing problem and what are you doing to aid the student with this problem?

TUTOR TRAINING VIDEOCASSETTES/MATERIALS

Brown, Beryl. PROBING SKILLS FOR TUTORS. University of California - San Diego. Videocassettes (2) include worksheets and manual to teaching questioning skills to tutors; $85.00. Topics are:

Clarification Probes
Critical Awareness Probes
Refocusing Probes
Prompting Probes
Re-directing Probes

Ferris, Elizabeth H. and Laurel S. Krautwurst. PEER TUTOR TRAINING TAPE. Flat Rock, North Carolina: Blue Ridge Technical Institute, 1978. Videocassette demonstrates good and poor tutor sessions; main ideas include:

Get to know your tutee.
Give positive reinforcement.
Do not impose your opinions on the tutee.
Admit it if you don't know the answer.
Arrange the physical environment in an effective manner.
Rephrase questions and explanations for clarification.
Be prompt and bring all necessary materials.
Set times for the next sessions before leaving.
Give the tutee your total attention.
Treat your tutees as equals.

Holmes, Louise. TUTOR TRAINING TAPE. Bethlehem, PA: Northampton County Area Community College, 3835 Green Pond Road (18017), 1979. (PROJECT AWARE) Video cassette demonstrates good and poor tutor sessions and some teaching techniques. Main ideas include:

Tutor tips: Learn tutee's name.
Show a positive attitude.
Get information.
Listen!
Pay attention to atmosphere.

Teaching techniques:
Explanation
Rephrasing and diagramming
Repetition and step-by-step

James B. Goode, University of Kentucky, Southeast Community College, Cloverlick Road, Cumberland, Kentucky 40823:

THE MECHANICS OF TUTORING ($5 plus a tape)
ACCOUNTABILITY IN TUTORING ($5 plus a tape)

Ricks College, Tutor Program, Rexburg, Idaho 83440:

CONTENT AREA COURSES SURVEY

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF TUTOR TRAINING RESOURCES

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4. Donovan, Richard and Barbara T. Schaier, eds. Critical Issues in Tutoring. Bronx, New York: Networks, Bronx Community College, 69 pp.

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8. Martin, Deanna C. et.al. "The Learning Center: A Comprehensive Model for Colleges and Universities." September 1977, 156 pp. (ED 162 294)

9. Maxwell, Martha. Improving Student Learning Skills. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1979.

10. Niedermeyer, Fred C. "Effects of Training on the Instructional Behaviors of Student Tutors." The Journal of Educational Research, Vol. 64, November 1970, pp. 119-123.

11. Riessman, Frank. "Student's Learning Styles: How to Determine, Strengthen, and Capitalize on Them." Today's Education, September-October 1976, pp. 94-8.

12. Sakiey, Elizabeth. "Training and Supervising Student Tutors for College Reading Programs." April 1979, 12 pp. (ED 177 501)

13. Solinger, Rickie. "A Peer Tutoring Program: The Director's Role." Journal of Developmental and Remedial Education, Vol. 2, #1, pp. 12-24.

14. Von Harrison, Grant and Arthur M. Cohen. "Empirical Validation of Tutor-Training Procedures." September 1969 (ED 058 282)

15. Yarington, David. Surviving in College. Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1977.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF THE FINGER LAKES

Peer-Tutee Questionnaire

Fall Semester 1984

As a participant in the Peer Tutor Program, we are interested in your opinion and evaluation in order to evaluate the program as it is and to make future improvements.

PART A	To a Great Extent	To a Medium Extent	Somewhat	Not at all
1) Do you feel more confident in class because of your tutoring sessions?	4	3	2	1
2) Do you feel more motivated to do more work in your course after a tutoring session?	4	3	2	1
3) Even though you are (or were) receiving tutorial help, do you confer with your instructor/instructors concerning the course(s) you are being tutored in?	4	3	2	1
4) Did your tutor build an effective and friendly atmosphere in your tutoring sessions?	4	3	2	1
5) Did the tutor relate what you did in your tutoring sessions with what you were doing in class?	4	3	2	1
6) Did the tutor present the tutorial material in a manner that you could understand and build on?	4	3	2	1

PART B

7) Describe briefly the techniques used by your tutor to help you better understand the course content. (Use the back of this sheet if necessary.)

8) State briefly any comments that you might have concerning your tutoring sessions. (Remember, this student-help program can only become more effective with your feedback.) [Again, use the back if necessary.]

OUR DOOR IS ALWAYS OPEN . . .

COME IN AND FIND OUT
WHAT THE LEARNING CENTER HAS TO OFFER!

- A drop-in service to give you quick advice on concerns
- Individual help in completing your course work
- Skills testing to help you determine your strengths and weaknesses
- A study file of old tests and worksheets
- A tutor program, which gives you individual or small group help in any course

STOP IN AT THE LEARNING CENTER

ROOM C-231 • 394-3500, Ext. 392

Community College of the Finger Lakes

CANANDAIGUA, NEW YORK 14424
TELEPHONE (716) 394 - 3500

Dear Tutee:

Welcome to the Tutor Program for Spring 1985. Please read the Tutee Program Handbook which outlines your responsibilities. In order for you to get help in our program you must:

*Keep track of your sessions on the tutee card.

*Call your tutee and the Learning Center if you cannot make a session (only 2 unexcused no-shows allowed).

*Come to the tutor session with questions, have read the textbook chapter assigned, bring lecture notes, and have attempted any assignments.

*Discuss any problems or questions immediatly with a Learning Center staff member.

Sincerely,

Howard, Dana and Sue

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF THE FINGER LAKES

Peer-Tutor Questionnaire

Fall Semester 1984

As a participant in the Peer Tutor Program, we are interested in your opinion and evaluation in order to evaluate the program as it is and to make future improvements.

PART A	To a Great Extent	To a Medium Extent	Somewhat	Not at all
1) Have you been conferring with your instructors/instructor concerning the tutoring you are doing in their courses?	4	3	2	1
2) Are your tutees more motivated after your tutoring sessions?	4	3	2	1
3) Do you encourage tutee contact with the instructor?	4	3	2	1
4) Do you listen effectively in your tutoring sessions?	4	3	2	1
5) Do you give appropriate, positive feedback to your tutees?	4	3	2	1
6) Do you offer encouragement even though the tutee may be making numerous errors?	4	3	2	1
7) Do you work at a pace that challenges the tutee, not frustrate the tutee?	4	3	2	1
8) Do you feel that your tutees feel better about themselves as learners because of your tutoring sessions?	4	3	2	1
9) Are your tutees more confident in class because of their tutoring sessions?	4	3	2	1
PART B: Is the person you are tutoring:				
10) lacking in self-confidence	4	3	2	1
11) embarrassed by his/her need for help	4	3	2	1
12) one who dislikes the instructor	4	3	2	1
13) one who dislikes the course	4	3	2	1
14) one who did not have the proper background to be successful in this course	4	3	2	1

PART B (continued)	To a Great Extent	To a Medium Extent	Somewhat	Not at all
15) having deep personal problems	4	3	2	1
16) having general academic problems	4	3	2	1
17) exhibiting poor study	4	3	2	1
18) lacking motivation or interest in college	4	3	2	1

PART C

Regardless of the number of tutor training sessions you have attended, what do you feel should be covered in a tutor training session(s) to better help you to become an effective tutor.

PART D

Comments?

Suggestions?

THE LEARNING CENTER is friendly, open, and willing to serve you.

HELP for Students

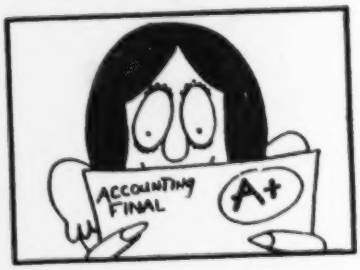
Learning Center

Community College of the Finger Lakes

HOURS

Monday-Thursday	8:00am-8:30pm
Friday	8:00am-4:00pm

Room C-231
394-3500 extension 392



DO ANY OF THESE STATEMENTS APPLY TO YOU?

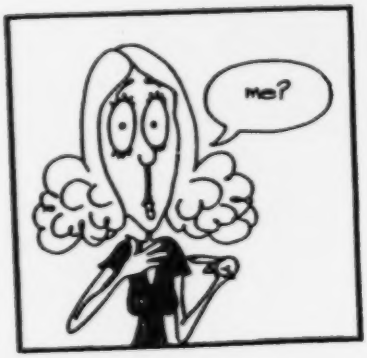
I forget everything I've read ten minutes after I close the book.

I don't seem to know where to start in completing this assignment.

I've never had to do a real research paper...until now. Yuk!

Tests shake me up. I think at first that I know the material, but then I flunk the exam.

I need to talk to someone about this class I'm taking. I can't seem to get with it.



If any of these situations are familiar to you, the LEARNING CENTER CAN HELP.

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The tutor program to give you individual or small group help in any course. This service is **FREE** to all CCFL students.

Call 394-3500, ext. 392 or stop by room C-231.

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